

From the author

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON

Mr. Colman's True State, &c.

ANIMADVERSIONS

OF

MR. COLMAN'S TRUE STATE, &c.

Theatrum

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON

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h.
Mr. Colman's True State, &c.

WITH SOME

R E M A R K S

On his little serious Piece called

The O X O N I A N in T O W N.

L O N D O N:

Printed for Walter at Charing-Cross; Doddsley in Pall-Mall; Fletcher
and Company in St. Paul's Church-Yard; Richardson and Urquhart
at the Royal Exchange, and Robson in Bond-street, MDCCLXVIII.

ANIMADVERSIONS

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Mr. Colman's True State, &c.

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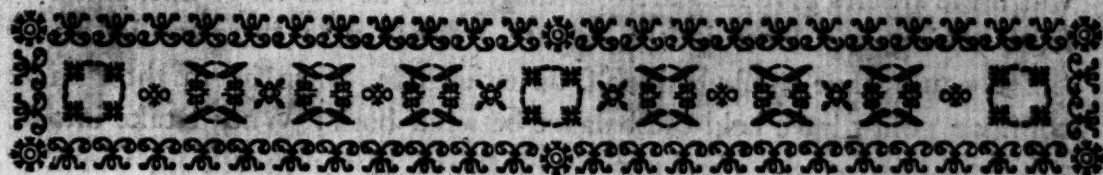
REMARKS

On his late famous Discourse

The OXONIAN TOWN.

LONDON:

Printed for Walter at Chancery-Cross; Doddley in Pall-Mall; Fletcher
and Company in St. Paul's Church-Yard; Richardson and Underhill
at the Royal Exchange; and Robson in Strand-street. MDCCLXXIII.

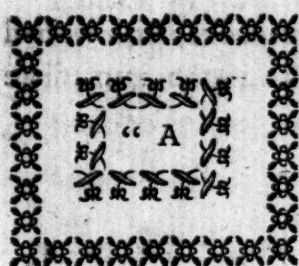


ANIMADVERSIONS

O N

Mr. Colman's True State, &c.

E X T R A C T.



ALTHOUGH the following state of our case
“ has been drawn up by Mr. Colman, I desire
“ to be considered as equally responsible for its
“ contents.”

W. POWELL.”

N O T E.

The subscriber of this short address appears to me, from the circumstances of his situation, an object of real pity. By the small share

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which

which the articles give him in the management, he was fairly discharged from taking any share in the dispute. What man therefore in his senses would have enlisted himself on either side, when he might with common policy have held the balance between both? When I take into this consideration the particular circumstance of his profession, which submits him to the insult of party every night he appears upon the stage, I am sorry to find this poor man so ill qualified to judge for himself, or so ill provided with friends to advise him. Whether he has closed with the stronger or the weaker faction, yielded to the better or been dup'd by the worse reasons, still he has made a total and implicit surrender of his impartiality and independance, and by the proof he has thereby given of his flagrant want of judgment, has undesignedly fixed the worst of imputations on his colleague, by exhibiting him to the world as a man who is capable of profiting by the exercise of superior policy, and deriving partial advantages to himself from the easiness and weakness of his friend.

E X T R A C T.

"If we entertained a proper regard for our reputations, and wished to be considered as men who held their good name as the immediate jewel of their souls." (p. 1.)

N O T E.

Many quotations in the above taste occur in the pamphlet under consideration, upon all which I have one general remark to make; which is, that the insertion of these tags and scraps from plays and farces into a piece that should turn upon plain fact and demonstration,

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is a gross abuse of the patience and expectation of the reader. If provincial phrases and expressions are esteemed marks of a man's rusticity, such play-house quotations are samples of the company he has kept, and the studies he has been engaged in : such flowers of rhetoric are very suitable embroidery in a love-speech to a young *actress*, but very unbecoming the stile of a serious appeal to the reason and judgment of mankind : 'tis a species of learning calculated merely for the latitude of the green-room, and favours much more of *George Colman the dramatic author*, than of *George Colman, Esquire*, whose education and connexions should have inspired him with higher ambition than to share in a play-house patent, and more pride than to contend for the management of a company of actors.

E X T R A C T.

" Contempt of slander is indeed an heroick quality, and conscious
 " innocence is the surest antidote to its poison. But these are circum-
 " stances, wherein the world has a kind of right to arraign our conduct;
 " not to mention that it requires a very uncommon share of philosophy
 " not to refute malice and scandal, when we have the means of justi-
 " fication in our power." (p. 1.)

N O T E.

This is a sample of modern fine-writing ; at the first view it carries with it an air and shadow of meaning ; upon examination we discover nothing but a jargon of nonsense, false grammar, and flat contradiction. *Contempt of slander*, says he, *is an heroic quality*, (granted) and *conscious innocence is the surest antidote to its poison*, that is, *to the poison of this*
 B 2 *heroic*

heroic quality; for he is too good a grammarian not to see that this sentence will bear no other construction: it follows therefore, that our author having pointed out to us what is the mark and characteristic of a *hero*; in the same sentence instructs us, both by precept and example, how to avoid running into such ridiculous extravagancies; and *conscious innocence* is the rule he lays down. But what, if after all, this should only be a grammatical inaccuracy, a small assault upon *Priscian's* head? Let our author take his choice, and plead to either indictment: a scholar of any spirit would most probably think the latter imputation the heaviest; and a manager, who is to sit in judgment upon the productions of all the men of genius who lay their labours at his feet, will hold himself most hurt by such a charge; let us therefore no longer quibble about words, but attend to arguments and reason. “*There are circumstances wherein the world has a kind of right to arraign our conduct.*” Here is a wonderful discovery in ethics! A dogma that would have become the mouth of Zeno! Of this profound remark let it be remembered that Mr. Colman is both author and example. Well! having laid down this *postulatum*, and established the authority of the world in arraigning our conduct under certain circumstances, he tells us in conclusion, that it requires uncommon philosophy not to refute scandal when we have it in our power. — The English of this remark I take to be, this — The world is right sometimes in arraigning our conduct, and a philosopher is always right in suffering it to be arraigned. — *Heroes* and *philosophers* have ever been the ridicule of men of wit, who found it too difficult to copy the virtues of either. But is not this description of *philosophy* pretty much the same picture he before gave us of *heroism*; for as the first part of the sentence states *contempt of slander* to be an *heroic quality*; the latter part tells us it is a *philosophical quality*? Great powers of reasoning as well as of writing! Behold an advocate exactly suited to his cause! The matter in dispute is a play-house squabble about actresses, and behold

A true

A true state of the differences drawn up with all the accuracy and elegance of a candle-snuffer.

E X T R A C T.

"If on the other hand some busy meddling scribbler has made free with their names, she will treat it with the *most silent* contempt." (p. 7.)

N O T E.

The above paragraph is clearly the production of a female pen, and conveys a sentiment at once very heroic and very philosophical; for our author has just now told us that contempt of slander is a quality that answers to both descriptions. Perhaps it is not common for ladies in their resentments to observe so strict a taciturnity, as Mrs. Yates has imposed on herself; for she assures us that her contempt shall be *most silent*; from whence I conclude that this female philosopher has a conception of comparative degrees of *silence*, and from an ambition of excelling in the most amiable quality a woman can possess, is resolved that her *silence* shall be *silenter* than any *silence* that ever was *heard*.

E X T R A C T.

"GENTLEMEN,

"We have publicly expressed ourselves to have been injured by the libellous paper left at Slaughter's coffee-house; we now apply to you for the information you have to-day promised by public advertisement concerning the author." (p. 8.)

NOTE.

N O T E.

In the name of manhood why all this circumlocution and posting backwards and forwards of letters and attorneys to ask a simple question of two gentlemen, who declared (and properly enough) that they would give no answer to any but personal enquiry? In this transaction our author leans rather more to the *philosopher* than the *hero*; and therein he has literally fulfilled his own doctrine; for knowing himself incapable of composing any thing professedly in abuse of himself, and not at all concerned in writing the *libellous paper* in question, he, relying upon this *conscious innocence* as the *surest antidote against the poison of heroic qualities*, wraps himself up in a *philosophical contempt of slander*; being content that the lawyer should stand between him and discovery, so long as he does but stand between him and danger.

In the 11th page we read of a *couple of gentlemen*, (an expression by the way only fit for a poulterer) applying to Mr. Powell to become a *joint purchaser with them of the patents, &c. of Covent-garden theatre*. This couple of gentlemen we find there represented to be *two inexperienced young men, who perhaps might know but little of the world*, (as natural a consequence of inexperience as need be) *and certainly could know nothing of the internal management of a theatre*. New and curious conclusions! *this couple of gentlemen*, or *two young men*, (call them which you like) being totally *inexperienced*, our cautious author declares doubtingly, and with a *perhaps*, that they might know but little of the world; but he atones for this hesitation, by roundly declaring that *they certainly could know nothing of the internal management of a theatre*. I was always suspicious that our author would be found bold, where he ought to be cautious, and timorous where it became him to be bold. To be sure experience and knowledge of the world are no bad qualities in the manager of a theatre, but if by them we are to understand an acquaintance with men and manners,

an easy behaviour and a polite address, I am apt to be of opinion that some theatres are managed without the assistance of any of these talents; so that had our author reversed his conclusion, I should have thought it safer to have pronounced their *youth* and *inexperience* certainly to have argued a want of knowledge of the world, (which being synonymous terms, he could not have risked much in the assertion) and to have expressed some doubt whether they were totally disqualified for the *internal management of a theatre*; for, if I have a right conception of the *internal operations of a manager*, neither their *youth* nor their *inexperience* would have been any objections to these gentlemen in such operations.

Though our author does not exactly tell us what the internal management of a theatre actually is, yet he tells us what it is like, which is some progress towards information, and may perhaps lead to an entire discovery: For if we consult the 12th page, we shall find *Mr. Colman observed that managing a theatre was like stirring a fire*, (consequently required great knowledge of the world) *which every man thought he could do better than any body else.* (Easy, familiar creature!) *Now gentlemen, said he, (putting the poker at the same time into the fire) I think I stir a fire better than any man in England.* Here our information leaves us, but we may fairly conclude that he did accordingly *stir the fire*, raised a mighty flame in a moment, and left a confounded stink for ever. There is another thing in the world that *stirs a fire* almost as well as the manager of Covent-garden theatre, and as this thing is described by Ovid in his *Art of Love*, I dare say it cannot have escaped so great an adept in that science.

Quamlibet extinctos injuria suscitât ignes. lib. iii. 597.

With this mode of *stirring up a fire* it is thought Mr. Colman is intimately acquainted, and I make no doubt principally depended upon it, when he boasted of his proficiency in that elegant accomplishment.

With

With what hopes he entered upon this eminent station, his own pen will tell us; and indeed his own praise is a subject on which he dwells with peculiar pleasure, and with reason, for singularity is a triumph over the prejudices of mankind.

"If he had my assistance, he (Mr. Powell) did not doubt of success." (p. 11.)

"Mr. Powell declared his opinion that they would reap more profit from a fourth share with Mr. Colman's assistance, than from a third without him." (*ibid.*)

"They (Messrs. Harris and Rutherford) had made proper inquiries concerning Mr. Colman, and found his accession to the partnership so desirable a circumstance, that they returned Mr. Powell many thanks for making so happy an improvement in their plan." (*ibidem.*)

"Repeatedly assured him of the great value they set upon his accession to their scheme, independent of every other consideration than their thorough persuasion of the advantage that would result from it in the success of the theatre."

I begin to be of Mr. Colman's opinion, as to this *couple of gentlemen*, and verily think they were *two inexperienced young men*. But is not our author apprehensive of his argument's proving too much, which is as dangerous a process in logick as need be; for if so much pains is taken to prove the good opinion these *two inexperienced young men* entertained of him, how came he so egregiously to forfeit their esteem? Prejudices so strongly imbibed must have required more than common assiduity on his side to remove; and I fancy it will be found that he had recourse upon this occasion to Ovid's recipe for *stirring a fire*, already described.

The

The disappointment and surprize these gentlemen must have felt, when their new associate came to be known and understood, put me in mind of a story, which is told of an officer of considerable rank and reputation, who, being in instant want of a servant, was applied to by a very good-looking man for his place, and directed by him to the gentleman in whose service he had last lived: The officer waited upon this gentleman, and finding him a very formal circumstantial man, and that he was about to enter on a tedious and deliberate harangue upon the several qualities of his servant, stopt him short, by telling him that, provided the person in question was but sober and honest, he desired to make no further enquiry concerning him, and, as he was exceedingly pressed in point of time, and must have a servant immediately, being to leave England the next day, he begged the gentleman to give him a short answer to those two questions, and not trouble himself to go into any further discussion about the matter: "Sir, says the gentleman, the man you enquire after is "I believe perfectly honest, and I never saw him drunk." In consequence of this the servant was hired: the next morning before the officer had risen out of his bed, his chamber door was burst open with surprising violence, the new servant enters, and in a raging fit of phrensy beats and belabours his defenceless master in a most cruel manner. As soon as our officer's wounds and bruises gave him leave, he betakes himself with all haste to the gentleman of whom he had enquired the character of this frantick fellow, and not without some heat was beginning to expostulate, when the gentleman interrupting him, replied, "Sir, the man you complain of "neither drinks nor thieves, but he is, as you rightly observe, a down-right madman. The questions you asked were truly and honestly answered; I am exceedingly sorry for the beating you have received; "but had your impatience, when you called upon me before, been less "peremptory, I could have told you that he had that very morning bestowed upon me just such a drubbing, as he has now done upon you."

Whoever wishes to see more proofs under our author's hand, of his own excellent talents for managing a theatre, may consult pages 14, 15, 17, 18, 26. and in p. 41. the reader will find the intimidated manager of Drury-lane theatre offering to give five hundred pounds a year to the associates of Mr. Colman, to buy him off from acting as manager. And does Mr. Colman seriously record this circumstance, as making either for Mr. Garrick's honour or his own? Alack-a-day! it is only telling the world that sagacious manager ridiculed him as much then, as he does now. If Mr. Garrick could have bought him off from entering upon the idle occupation he seems so fond of, I fancy it would have been happy for our author, even if he had paid the purchase-money himself. Misfortunes that spring from folly or obstinacy, have no claim upon our pity; and though our unfortunate manager complains in the words of Abraham in Harlequin's Invasion, that *those happy days are over*, when Mr. Garrick thought so highly of his talents, yet I think he is now not less likely to make a good bargain with that gentleman, than he was before; for if Mr. Colman will article to write a pamphlet, (be it either *a true or false state*) in the stile and manner of the present, in the course of every year, and each season produce a farce like the *Oxonian in Town*, I dare say Mr. Garrick, while he continues manager of Drury-lane theatre, will make him a handsome allowance for his pains. In the last elegant performance to which our author's quotation carried me, (viz. that collection of attic wit called Harlequin's Invasion) I do indeed find a taylor, who is said to look as well without a head as with one, but I should fear that, were you to rob Mr. Colman of his head, you would strip him of the only particular for which he deserves to be valued.

I have referred to a great many passages wherein our author celebrates his own fame and reputation; I cannot in justice omit one particular, wherein he has done honour to his poor colleague Mr. Powell, for in the

15th page he tells us, that *he*, (Mr. Powell) *showed great repugnance to giving him the direction.*

To this monument of his justice, let me add one of his delicacy towards a joint patentee, where, speaking of Mrs. Lessingham, he declares to Mr. Harris a propensity in himself "*to shew her any reasonable partiality, which, (says he) I did not doubt was all that would be required.*" What a *reasonable partiality* is, or whether any *partiality* can be so, I leave our author to explain; but this I am willing to give him credit for, that his *partialities* are as *reasonable* as any man's. His tenderness in not alarming the jealousy of a friend, proceeded no doubt from a generous scorn at taking any advantages from those irresistible attractions, which nature has flung around him, and which though he scrupled to employ, he could not but be conscious he possessed. If indeed the ambitious fair challenges him to appear in the full lustre of his charms, the thunderer shines forth, and

"*Semele miserabilis ardet.*"

But these are matters that cannot easily be concealed, and therefore should seldom be put in practice, for even this chief of the heathen deities had ties of a domestic nature, which he thought it expedient to pay some attention to: for Juno had fingers, and Jupiter had eyes.

Dii quoque habent oculos.

E X T R A C T.

"The curtain drew up on the 14th of September with seeming content on all sides, and the most entire harmony in the cabinet of the four kings of Brentford." (p. 19.)

N O T E.

I wonder if this reinforcement of two kings of Brentford more than are to be found in the *Rehearsal* was amongst the valuable additions made to that piece by our disinterested author, for which he was contented to take the slender gratification of sixty-four pounds five shillings.

But if he rallies himself with such pleasantry, he don't forget his friends. *They (Messrs. H. and R.) told me indeed that two negatives made one affirmative. I allowed the truth of that logic; but told them, that both together, like the two letters in the word NO, (well, now let's hear) they made but one negative. [p. 22.]* Prodigious! inimitable! *There's hit for hit for you!* No wonder they could never keep terms with him after this: let them take care how they play their negatives upon him. Hence forward, Gentlemen-Managers, whether your denominations and degrees be poets, players, or independant citizens of the world at large, that world cannot regret your animosities; for had not this event come forth, this incomparable repartee upon the letters no, so far beyond Joe Miller's upon those of on, would probably never have migrated beyond the circle of our author's companions, and consequently never have been known to the civilized part of mankind.

Having heard this stroke of his wit, the brilliant effusion of his brain, take this one sample of the natural emanations of his heart. *I told Mr. Harris, that finding I was become so disagreeable a partner to himself and Mr. Rutherford, I should retain my share on purpose to plague them, (p. 23.)* An ingenuous avowal truly! A very candid, liberal, manly principle! —Surely an expression scarce allowable in a chambermaid; never ought to have defiled the mouth of a man of honour or education! It is as offensive

to good sense, as good manners ; as void of morality as it is of meaning ; as well warranted by reason, as it is by religion. — *I find I can plague you, and therefore I will* ; O shame, shame, shame ! were sentiments like these natural to the heart of man, society would be insupportable ; surely our author is a disciple of Hobbes's, for this vile maxim *homo homini lupus*, is the very first principle and basis of his diabolical doctrine : but heaven be thanked, such principles are not common amongst men, and wherever they are discovered, the abettors and professors of them are considered with abhorrence as the pests and monsters of society. Had our author less *internal* acquaintance with the theatre, and more with the church, he would have learned that these motives, on which he now professes to act, are diametrically contrary to every rule and doctrine of Christianity. — But I blush to mix such a word with such a work, as that I am reviewing ; and I am as much at a loss as Mr. Colman was, why Mr. Rutherford should, upon hearing the declaration in question, *dwell so much on the words manly and gentleman-like* ; I declare I cannot think what that gentleman could allude to ; nothing surely that had transpired from the author of that sentiment ; and I don't wonder that Mr. Colman took occasion to tell him, *that he had never in his life heard those words so often repeated.* (p. 23.)

Hitherto our author has treated us with nothing but mock-majesty, Kings of Brentford and monarchs of the green-room : he has now the hardiness to carry us up to the real throne, and introduces into his paltry quarrel the most respectable name on earth. What though a Roman tyrant is recorded to have had so vitiated a taste as to mix with singers and dancers on a public stage, would he falsely argue from so contemptible an example, that the unworthy concerns of a discordant theatre can find entrance and entertainment in a royal breast, replete with sentiments of the most elevated nature ? Yet to this great and excellent personage has

he the confidence to appeal. "Your keen resentment does not terrify me, (says he) nor ever shall, while I know I can justify my conduct to our Royal Master, the lord chamberlain, and the public; to all whom I am very willing to submit it." (p. 26.) Incredible assurance! Here we find His Majesty, my lord chamberlain, and the mob made joint referees. He professes that he continues to act in the capacity of manager merely to plague his associates in the patent, and yet dares to appeal to the justest monarch upon earth for the clearness and equity of his intentions. What effrontery is this, to think that the person in the world who most abhors the motive, can approve the action which springs from it! 'Tis like the shameless chicanery of that lawyer, who pleaded an intent to murder in order to escape the penalties of maiming.

I pass over the 33d page, as what I do not chuse to repeat: in the 35th we are told that *the play of Cymbeline was resumed and performed by the express command of Their Majesties, to whose royal orders it would appear an indirect affront to discontinue a performance so likely to redound to the interest and credit of the theatre.* Behold how fast he improves in familiarity; making that Great Personage now a party, whom before he had made only a referee: and this because the play was likely, as he says, to redound to the interest and credit of the theatre. What connexions, in the name of wonder, has his mind framed between that Personage and the interests of the theatre? Yet we find this idea repeated in the same page, where, speaking still of the above play, our author says, that *there was a great demand for places against any future representation of it; not to repeat the duty incumbent on us to testify the utmost respect to the Royal Order, by which it had been revived at our theatre.* Were ever duty to a King and a demand for places in a play-house, respect to Royal Orders and prospects of a full house ever jumbled and confounded together in the same sentence and sentiment before this? And to add to this indecorum, the
first

first place in the proposition is evidently taken up by the hopes of full boxes, and duty and respect to the Royal Orderis brought in with—*Not to repeat*—consequentially as it were, and as an auxiliary only.—But let us drop this subject, and turn to something less serious.

In this view I should think nothing can answer our purpose better than selecting a few flowers of Mr. Colman's oratory, which, when bound together, will make a most precious nosegay of elegance. Take a few of the following sea-phrases, collected from the schools of Wapping and Deptford.—*We hope still to be favoured with the prosperous gale of public favour.* (*Favoured with public favour*; elegant tautology) *and although it is not easy to keep the helm in such a boisterous sea, yet we hope, by plain sailing, to be able to run before the wind, and that the ship will live in a storm.* [p. 62.] What a chaos and confusion of foul and fair weather! The whole element seems in a state of distraction, as if all the witches in *Macbeth* had conjured up a tempest in our poor author's cloudy imagination, where

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

Here we are at once presented with a *prosperous gale*, and a *boisterous sea*; the ship is in a storm, and the pilot can scarce keep the helm, yet by plain sailing the runs before the wind, like a wherry upon the Thames. Would not any man conclude from all this, that our author knew as much of writing as he does of sailing, and as much of sailing as he does of flying. Take another sample in the same taste — *I was embarked on a sea of troubles, and was resolved to make way, if possible, with cheerfulness and resolution.* [p. 17. ver. fin.] Here are the same metaphors and the same tautology; for, as in the first instance he hoped to be *favoured with the public favour*; in the second case, he is *resolved to make way with resolution*: the conclusions naturally to be drawn from these pleonasmis are,

H T O M

are, first, That being *favoured* with the public *favour*, he must be a *favourite* of the public; and, secondly, that being *resolved* to act with *resolution*, he must be a very *resolute* fellow. I say, these would be the inferences naturally to be drawn, what shall we say, if neither of these conclusions shall be found to take place in the person of our author?

EXTRACT.

"And I now request it as a favour, that all which hath passed on this subject may be buried in silence and oblivion." [p. 18.]

NOTE.

This is a passage in a letter from our author to Mr. Rutherford; and though it does not strike one at first sight, that publishing this to the world is the direct way of *burying* it in *silence and oblivion*, yet I dare say the event will prove that he could not have followed a more effectual course.

EXTRACT.

"It was apparently injurious to a little piece, especially one of so serious a cast, to be performed after one of the lightest and pleasantest comedies in our language." (p. 24.)

NOTE.

N O T E.

I believe a man would make a pretty many guesses about this *little piece of so serious a cast*, before he could suppose it to refer to the farce of the *Oxonian in Town*,; a petty piece, which presents us with the evening's amusements of a young student, in his excursions from the university, laudably spent in the fashionable recreations of whoring and gaming. The scene of these frolicks is very properly laid in Covent-garden, and the worthy personages of the drama are excellently well suited to the latitude of that place; the ladies being all common prostitutes, and the gentlemen, with the exception of one only, Irish sharpers, rogues, bawds, bailiffs, and pick-pockets: so that, as in the piece now under review, instead of meeting a true state of differences between managers, we are presented with an absolute theatrical atalantis; in like manner the farce in question adjourns the stage to the Shakespear tavern at the next door, and with such partiality for the loose pleasures that are to be met with in that house of recreation, that one should think our author was upon extraordinary terms with his next door neighbour. For in this *serious little piece*, the author has kindly laid open to the youth of both sexes, those mysterious rites, which are celebrated to Bacchus and Venus, within the many temples peculiarly dedicated to those two deities, which abound in such numbers under those piazzas, where the scene of action lies, and whose doors stand so commodiously open, and altars blaze so temptingly to the wishful school-boy or prentice, as he passes by. How difficult, if not impracticable, is his escape now rendered, when he comes from the theatre with an imagination decently and warmly imprest with these intoxicating scenes of dissipation and delight; when he sees the glass circulated with such gaiety, his ears tingling with the joyous sounds of the catches, the toasts, and the hurdy-gurdies; and his heart throbbing with desire at the bewitching

bewitching forms of the women, their wanton airs and attitudes, their kisses, their dances, and their discourse! Did our author flatter himself that he could wipe out these rooted impressions with the cold moral sentence, that concludes the whole, uttered by the mouth of a woman of pleasure, and perhaps never reaching the ears of one half of the audience, from the variety of noises which accompany the finishing speech of every play?—No, he may depend on it, the poison has long before this entered the veins of many of his unhappy hearers, as the disorders consequential thereof probably will do into their bones; and it is as little in the power of one period of morality, as it will be for one dose of physic to disperse the infection.

Our younger hopes, who find means to elope to a play from the schools of Eton, Westminster, Hackney, Marybone, and the numberless academies this city swarms with, are here instructed and initiated in the courses they are to follow when they come to the universities, which indeed both in the prologue and throughout the piece, are painted more like brothels, than seats of piety and learning: for such, it is to be hoped, upon enquiry they will yet be found.

I would ask the author of these scenes, if he can recollect whether he has upon his list one single *acting* play, where women of abandoned characters like those in his piece, are introduced merely for wanton purposes; and if the perpetration of such open debaucheries with them is admitted to pass with impunity. The loose scenes between *Antonio* and *Aquilina*, are always suppressed in the representation of *Venice Preserv'd*; and it is well known they were wrote by a needy poet, to flatter the vices of a profligate monarch, and to satyrize the famous Antony Earl of Shaftesbury, then in an ill odour at court. Whores, like ghosts, are never to be brought upon the stage, without the utmost caution and reserve,

reserve, and only for very peculiar uses, and in very extraordinary circumstances. *Milwood*, in *George Barnell*, is a character that would go as near to put the vice of fornication out of fashion, as would a representation of the Lock Hospital. The intrigue of *Mirabel* with *Lamorce* in the *Inconstant*, is attended with immediate punishment. Many other examples might be cited.—But how in the name of all that's virtuous, is our author's *young Oxonian* disgrac'd or chastiz'd for his wanton excesses with women of pleasure? His passion for the gaming table indeed may be damped, by discovering what a crew of sharpers he had got in league with; but I don't recollect any occurrence to put him out of humour with the ladies. *Lucy* indeed had like to have trepanned him into marriage; but that escape would in the reason of things rather tend to fix him in loose and vicious attachments, as being a system of less hazard; *Lucy's* affair therefore is a caution against marriage, and nothing else: the only champion on the side of virtue therefore is honest *Knowell*; his character, indeed, is some counterpoise to the scale of vice; pictures of friendship, as they are the most pure, are perhaps the most pleasing of any the stage can hang forth to our view; but, alas! our author has enviously contrived to dash even *Knowell's* virtues with a blemish, by making him a suitor to the sister of his friend, and thereby fullying the disinterestedness of his conduct.

One question only now remains to be asked; is this very unbecoming satire upon the discipline of the universities, and the morals of their students, perfectly true, perfectly candid, and in this particular is it perfectly generous with respect to Oxford? Ought the son to wound the vitals of his *alma mater*? And is he aware to what dangerous extent such a parricidal act may be carried? When he was led trembling upon the stage by his colleague Mr. Powell, to answer to the complaints of the offended Irish, could he have acquitted himself, had his fellow stu-

dents joined in the charge? The reputation of our universities is a national concern of the highest and most sacred importance? The welfare of the rising generation, and the reputation of the present, in a manner is in their keeping: to them the sciences look for their proficient, and religion for her protectors; our laws, our liberties, and the blessings of our happy constitution, are not only there first to be known, but from thence are finally to be defended: But I ask pardon; my warmth transports me too far in a defence that will become an abler advocate: I blush when I see academical characters brought upon the stage; but I burn when I hear them lambasted. Gowns and square caps, hitherto the apparels only of conjurers, are now transplanted from our universities to equip Mr. Woodward for a prologue.—A prologue did I call it?—But I will not give it a hard name, though it bestows so many upon those to whom that dress exclusively should belong. And let it be remembered, that more particularly in the prologue the poet is, generally supposed to speak in person; are then all these offences to be palliated by one conciliating tag at the end of the piece, from the mouth too (as I said before) of a harlot? 'Tis a circumstance, which the ridicule of it makes more offensive perhaps than any besides.

I must now take my leave of our author, by declaring to him and to the world, that impartiality, and not prejudice, has drawn these censures from me: and that I shall gladly embrace any opportunity his genius may give me of atoning for the seriousness of this rebuke, when either his heart, or his pen, shall afford me a worthy subject for applause. Under good government I respect the stage as second only to the pulpit.—But I will for ever take up arms, as the friend of human nature, against every publication that tends to corrupt the honest, or to seduce the innocent.

F I N I S.